MINUTES

OF THE

FORTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

MISSISSIPPI

BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

HELD WITH THE

EBENEZER CHURCH, AMITE CO., MISS.,

October 6th, 7th and 8th, 1855.

NATCHEZ.

PRINTED AT THE DAILY COURIER OFFICE.

1855.

FORTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

EBENEZER CHURCH, AMITE CO., MISS.,
OCTOBER, 6, 1855.

The Mississippi Baptist Association met pursuant to adjournment, with the Ebenezer Church. The Introductory Sermon was preached according to appointment by Elder F. Clark, from Exodus, 9th chapter, 20th and 21st verses.

ITEM 1. After a short recess, the Delegates from the different Churches composing this Association, met in the Temperance Hall, and prayer was offered by Elder Z. Reeves, who called the Association to order.

2. The former Clerk being absent, Bro. L. Perkins was appointed Clerk, until the Association should be organized.

3. Appointed Bros. J. B. Quinn and Geo. F. Webb reading Clerks.

4. Called for and read letters from twenty-four Churches and enrolled the names of their Delegates.

5. The Association then organized by re-electing Elder Z. Reeves, Moderator, and Bro. L. Perkins, Clerk; Bros. S. M. Brian and G. P. Claughton, Tellers.

6. Ministering brethren present of our faith and order, were invited to take seats and participate with us.

7. A door was opened for the reception of Churches. The following viz: Shady Grove and Fort Adams Churches, applied for admittance into our body, and being found Orthodox, were received and the right hand of fellowship extended to their Delegates by the Moderator.

8. The following Committees were appointed by the Moderator, viz: Committee on Preaching, Bros. Wm. L. Johns, Jas. A. Jenkins, and Jas. B. Quinn.

9. Committee on Finance, Bros. S. W. Bullock, J. W. Felder, and G. F. Webb.

Committee to assist the clerk in arranging the statistics, Bros. S. M. Brian, and G. P. Claughton.

10. Committee of arrangement and revision, Elders F. Clark and W. Clark and Bro. J. B. Quinn, with the Moderator and Clerk.

11. Committee to write an Obituary on the death of Bros. R. Thompson, and Isa. Cain, Elders M. S. Shirk and F. Clark.

12. The Committee on Preaching reported that Elders Reeves, Caperton and F. Clark, preach on the Lord's day in the order of their names.

13. Received correspondence from sister Associations as follows, viz:

Ebenezer—A letter but no Messenger.

Pearl River—A letter by the hands of Elder A. McKenzie, to whom the right hand of fellowship was extended by the Moderator.

Eastern Louisiana—Elder A. Pennington with a package of minutes, who received the right hand of fellowship by the Moderator.

Mississippi River—Elder Wm. B. Wall, with minutes, who received the right hand of fellowship by the Moderator.

15. Appointed Correspondence as follows, viz:

Mississippi River—Elder M. S. Shirk, and Bro. Wm. L. Johns, Messenger, and Elder F. Clark, to write.

Eastern Louisiana—Elders W. Clark and Z. Reeves, Messengers, and Bro. J. W. Felder, to write.

Union—Elders E. McCaa, and Wm. Whitney Messengers, and Bro. G. F. Webb, to write.

Pearl River—Elders S. Coker and Z. Reeves and Bro. J. B. Quinn, Messengers, and Bro. J B. Quinn to write.

Ebenezer—Elders Z. Reeves and W. Clark Messengers, and Bro. C. C. Lea to write.

16. The stand having been occupied since the introductory by Elders Pennington and Caperton, the Association then adjourned to 9 o'clock, Monday morning. Concluding prayer by A. McKenzie.

Exercises of the Sabbath.

The congregation assembled at an early hour at the stand, when Elder Z. Reeves preached from John, 3d chapter and 30th verse. He was followed by Elder Caperton, from Gallatians, 1st chapter and 11th and 12th verses. A short intermission was then given for refreshment, after which the congregation again came together, and Elder F. Clark preached from Romans, 1st chapter and 16th verse. He concluded with a warm and feeling exhortation, when many of our dear young friends were seen crowding to the anxious seat, requesting an interest in the prayers of God's people.

Liberty Church, paid W. M. Farrer, Agent for For. Missions,	$52 00
East Fork Church, paid W. M. Farrer,	10 75
Bogue Chitto Church, paid W. M. Farrer,	15 00
Bro. E. Rush rec'd from various friends,	86 00

Respectfully submitted,

J. W. FELDER,
GEO. F. WEBB,
S. W. BULLOCK,
} Committee.

JAS. B. QUIN, Treasnrer.

Appendix C.

The Financial Committee on the funds sent up to this Association for associational purposes, report as follows:

To this amount in the hands of the Treasurer,		$100 83
Contributions from the Churches,		150 95
		$251 78
To this amount paid out—		
Paid S. Coker,	$ 6 00	
Paid Z. Reeves,	12 00	
Paid W. Clark,	14 00	
Paid H. B. Cole,	4 00	
Paid A. McKenzie,	12 00	
Printing these Minutes,	70 00	
Superintending the same,	15 00	
		$133 00
Balance in hands of Treasurer,		$ 118 78

Respectfully submitted,

J. W. FELDER,
GEO. F. WEBB,
S. W. BULLOCK,
} Committee.

CIRCULAR LETTER,

BY BRO. WM. P. DODDS.

To the Churches constituting the Mississippi Association:

Dear Brethren: According to an order made at your last Association, held at Sarepta Church, it becomes our duty to address you this Circular Letter. We have selected for our subject the visible *Kingdom or Church of Christ.*

In regard to what constitutes the visible *Kingdom or Church of Christ*, there is a diversity of opinion—some say the clergy is the Church, some say the official members of religious society, others a religious establishment in union with the State, and co-extensive with a province, kingdom, or empire, and others a house of worship. All these cannot be correct, and we humbly conceive that they are all wrong. A little attention to the meaning of the word Church will assist us in ascertaining what the Kingdom of Christ is. The Greek word *ekklesea*, which is usually translated Church in the New Testament, means a congregation or assembly. This word is composed of two words, which mean to call out; "it was originally used to express an assembly among the Greek citizens of the Greek republic." When legislators were selected from the citizens, and were convoked, they were an *ekklesea*; they were the called out. It does not, however, specify what kind of a congregation is alluded to. This being the case, the Jewish nation is called. (Acts 7, xxxviii.) "The Church in the wilderness," that is, the congregation of Israel. In the New Testament, the term Church, in its application to the followers of Christ, alludes either to a particular congregation of saints, or to the redeemed in the aggregate. It is used in the latter sense in Eph. 1, xxii, 3, xxi, and other places. But we are treating of the visible *Kingdom or Church*, and in this sense it is most frequently used in the New Testament; hence we read of the Church in Jerusalem, the Church at Corinth, the Church of the Thessalonians, &c. A congregation of saints organized according to the Gospel, whether that congregation is large or small, is a New Testament Church; to this argrees the Book of Common Prayer; "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance." This definition of the visible Kingdom or Church of Christ, is also indorsed by the Methodist discipline.

What are the qualifications of those who are to constitute the visible *Kingdom or Church* of Christ?

A proper description of these qualifications will throw additional light on the nature of the *Kingdom* of Christ. What, then, are they? We answer; Repentance, Faith, Regeneration, and Baptism.

REPENTANCE.—John, whose preaching was, according to Mark 1, i, ii, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," preached, saying to the people, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." This was the baptism of repentance.

When John was cast into prison, the Saviour came "unto Gallilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the Gospel." When the Apostles were sent forth, they preached that man should repent; and Jesus, after his resurrection, said: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached, in his name, to all nations." Peter said, on the day of Pentecost: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; every one of you, for the remission of sins." And Paul, who testified at Ephesus for the space of three years: "Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," proclaimed in Athens, "God commendeth all men everywhere to repent."

The Gospel is full of the doctrine of repentance. It is a Gospel doctrine. The law knows nothing of it. The language of the law is, do and live—not repent—that you may be pardoned. The Gospel alone brings to view a repentance, available on account of its connection with the remission of sins. Repentance involves such a change of mind in reference to sin, as is indispensable to a proper appreciation of the blessings of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Hence, no impenitent sinner can constitutionally enter into the Kingdom; there is no place more inappropriate for the impenitent than the Church of Christ.

FAITH.—Faith is a second qualification for entrance into the visible *Kingdom* of the Messiah. There is much importance attached in the Scripture to faith in Christ. "He that believeth in Him is not condemned;" "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;" "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" "To Him, give all the prophets witness, that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." These passages, and a host of others, demonstrate the fact, that faith in Christ is recognized as an important principle in the economy of grace; not that faith has any merit in it—it is a duty, and no duty can have merit in it. But while faith has no merit in it, it brings the soul into vital contact with the blood of atonement, which does possess infinite merit—it unites to Christ. By it we receive Christ, and with Him all the blessings of the Gospel. Christ is the object of Gospel faith. Saving faith has respect to Him and embraces Him. It is said faith precedes repentance. It is true the sinner, before he repents, believes that there is a God whose law he has violated. But is this faith in Christ as *a saviour?* Surely not. Paul did not think so when he testified "repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;" he placed repentance first, because it has an evangelical priority to faith. Repentance is towards God; it has re-

spect to God as a law-giver, whose law the repenting sinner has violated. Faith is towards Christ; it lays hold of him as the atoning Lamb for sin, whose obedience and death met the demands of the law. The atonement of Christ provides for the forgiveness of the sins which repentance recognizes as committed against the Law-Giver. Then it follows that no sinner feels his need of Christ without that sense of sin which repentance implies. He that does not repent of sins committed against God, as the law-giver, will not, does not, cannot receive Christ as the Saviour. The exercise of repentance is a prerequisite to the exercise of faith. "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel," does not mean believe the Gospel and repent. How important to have everything in its proper place; first, by transposing things, we should preach "another Gospel." Faith in Christ is the instrument which achieves the sinner's justification before God, is an essential qualification for admittance into Christ's visible Kingdom. No unbeliever, idiot, or infant has any right there.

Regeneration.—The third qualification for admittance into the Kingdom of Christ, is so blended with repentance and faith, as scarcely to require a formal mention. Regeneration is the spiritual process by which we become creatures in Christ Jesus, and born again—born of the spirit, born of God, quickened, renewed after the image of God. "Ye are all," said Paul to the Galatians, "the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus." John says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." If faith, as we have seen, is a prerequisite for admittance into the visible Kingdom of Christ, then is regeneration also, for they are inseparable; for all who believe in Christ in the Gospel sense are regenerated, and it follows that, if faith is a prerequisite to baptism, regeneration is also; this being the case, regeneration does not take place in baptism. The Kingdom of Christ being spiritual in its nature, repentance, faith, and regeneration are the spiritual prerequisites to membership, and are of necessity invisible and intangible—they may exist, and be known only to the possessor and his God. The unbeliever and unregenerate cannot, according to its constitution, have anything to do with it, nor can unconscious infants, who cannot understand its laws and regulations. Its organization had no reference to those who do not believe, or to those who cannot believe. Let it never be forgotten, that the only suitable materials for the visible Kingdom of Christ, are penitent, believing, regenerate persons. To make use of other materials, is to subvert the fundamental principles of its organization.

It is also a regulation of the King of Zion, that his spiritual subjects be organized into visible local congregations. These congregations had a regular visible organization, and there must have been some visible act of initiation into them; but how?

Baptism—another qualification for admittance into the visible Kingdom of Christ, and to its full privileges, was administered. There can, according to the Gospel, be no visible Church without baptism. Baptism draws the line of demarkation between the Church and the

world. To this agrees Dr. Griffin, of Williams College, a distinguished Presbyterian. He says that "baptism is the initiating ordinance which introduces us into the visible Church; of course, where there is no baptism, there is no visible Church; that we ought not to commune with those who are not baptized, and of course are not Church members, even if we regard them as Christians." "I have," says he, "no right to send the second elements [of the communion] out of the Church."—Bapt. Lib., 211. Baptism is, therefore, the believer's first public act of obedience to Jesus Christ. Repentance, faith, and regeneration are private matters between God and the soul; they invoke internal piety. There must be an external manifestation; this manifestation is made in baptism. In baptism there is a relationship to the three persons in the Godhead manifested. We are said to be baptized into the death of Christ; we profess our reliance on his death for salvation, and we emblematically declare that, as he died for sin, so we have died to sin, and have risen from our death in tresspasses and sins to newness of life; we solemnly commemorate the burial and resurrection of our Saviour, and ourselves symbollically buried to the world. In baptism, our sins are declaratively remitted—formally washed away. Washing in water frees the body from literal pollution. Baptism is a symbolic release from the pollution of sin. There is an actual, real remission of sins when we believe in Christ. There is a declarative, formal, symbolic remission in baptism. It is as clear as the sun at noonday, that repentance, faith, regeneration and baptism [immersion] are indispensable to a constitutional entrance into, and constitutional citizenship in, the visible Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is a violation of the spirit, and subversive of the order of the Gospel, to make unbelievers and unconscious infants Church members.

When was the visible Kingdom of Christ set up? If what has been said of the qualifications for membership be true, the discussion of this subject need not be protracted; for it is evident that, before the coming of John the Baptist, there was no community on earth membership in which was dependant upon repentance, faith, regeneration, and baptism. A fleshly relationship to Abraham, second citizenship in the old Jewish Kingdom; but the harbinger of the Messiah said to Abraham's natural descendants: "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father," &c. The language of John was deeply mortifying to Jewish pride and self-complacency; it indicated a new era, in which relationship to Abraham, to avail anything, must be spiritual, not natural. Such a declaration was unwelcome to Jewish ears, and repulsive to Jewish hearts. It laid the axe at the root of the tree—the old Jewish economy was to be hewn down, and the new Gospel Kingdom set up, for John here refers to a new Kingdom; he said: "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Was it the old Jewish Kingdom that was at hand? Cer-

tainly not; the new Kingdom was at hand. The injunction "repent," was new, and the argument enforcing it was new. That the preaching of John was the beginning of a new era, is manifest from the Saviour's language: "The Law and the prophets prophesied until John; since that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man passeth into it." The phrase "Kingdom of God," is descriptive of a dispensation clearly distinguishable from the economy indicated by the expression, "The Law and the prophets." From the coming of John, the Kingdom of God was preached, and the people passed into it. Could they have passed into a Kingdom that did not exist? If it was not set up until Pentecost, into what did they pass? Or if the Jewish and Gospel Kingdoms are the same, could they pass into a Kingdom in which they already had citizenship? Impossible!

Again: the Saviour said to the Scribes and Pharisees, "ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men, for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." Here we have two things incontrovertibly proved, that the Kingdom of Heaven, was then in existence, (long before the day of Pentecost,) and that it was not identical with the Jewish Kingdom. If it had not been in existence, it could not have been entered, nor could it have been shut up. If it was identical with the Jewish Kingdom, the Scribes and Pharisees were already in it. But they were not in it, for the Saviour says "ye neither go in yourselves," &c. If, then, they were in the Jewish Kingdom, and not in the visible Kingdom of Heaven, the two Kingdoms cannot be the same. This is self-evident That the Jewish and Gospel Kingdoms are not identical is manifest, from the fact that citizens of the former had, by a new process, to become citizens of the latter. How could this be, if the idea of identity has even a plausible claim to truth? It has no such claim. And there are insuperable objections to the hypothesis that the Kingdom of Christ had no existence prior to the Day of Pentecost.

What was there amidst the penticostal transactions that indicated the organization of a new Church? Absolutely nothing. Repentance was preached, but in this nothing was new. Baptism was administered, [probably,] but this had been done from the days of John—nothing new. There were added to them. Added to what? To the Church, every unbiassed mind answers. So Luke answers it: "The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." The Church must have existed on the day of Pentecost, or there could have been no additions to it. And what is the conclusion of the whole matter? It is, that the Kingdom or Church of Christ may be dated from the time that John made ready a people prepared for the Messiah. And there has been, from that day to this, an unbroken continuation of Gospel Churches, viz: Churches constituted and made up of regularly baptized [immersed] believers, owing no allegiance to any Pope, Bishop, or King, but the King in Zion. History abundantly testifies the *duties* that this Kingdom or Church is to perform. Some of these duties are alluded to in the following passages of Scripture:

"Ye are the salt of the earth." A Church, in its doctrines, and discipline, and spirit, and practice, should always answer to this description, and to the following: "Ye are the light of the world," holding forth the lamp of life, "among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

These are significant expressions, by which the true character of the Church is delineated. And the Saviour points out the renovating characteristic that it is to possess, by remarking "The Kingdom of Heaven is as leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." The above expressions give somewhat an extended view of Christian duty. The preserving, enlightening and renovating effects of Christianity on the world are presented. The first of them calls into exercise the first grand principle of the Gospel—*Love*. How beautifully the characteristic is described, and how strongly it is insisted in the Scriptures: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." This was the Saviour's great command, and the prayer of the Apostle was, "The Lord make you to abound in love one toward another and all men." This was the new commandment, "That ye love one another, and love your enemies." To love is to be happy. When this spirit prevails in a society, it becomes the centre of attraction; when it is lost, a society becomes a repellant body. How desirable that this sacred affection should be more and more exhibited by all who profess the religion of the meek and loving Saviour; in watching over each other in love, they would prevent most of the evils that disturb the peace of the Church. How much better to prevent than to cure evils.

This can be done, generally, by timely watching and prudent admonitions. In order to accomplish this desirable end, two things are necessary—humility and submission. "Submit yourselves one to another, in the fear of God." Under the law, to allow a brother to sin without admonition, was considered equal to hating him.—Leviticus, 18, xvii. How much more, then, shall we love and admonish our brethren to the Gospel Kingdom? Never fail to admonish until you have a disaffection for him; then you will only increase the difficulty. Love should be the main-spring of action, and the good of the offender the leading object. All members of a Christian Church should endeavor to settle their personal differences among themselves—and if not, to take the next steps pointed out in the 18th chapter of Matthew, and a forgiving spirit is binding on all: "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God's holy and beloved bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, even as Christ forgave you." So also do ye. Such are the duties of Christians in discipline. It is also their duty to put forth personal efforts to extend the influences of Christianity, by living and leading a prayerful life, praying in secret in the family, in public, and on all suitable occasions. Labor to raise higher the standard of practical piety in your Churches, so that the leaven may work its way into all

the forms of society around you, till the whole lump be leavened. To do this more effectually, it is proper that you strive to raise up a more enlightened ministry; you should prayerfully seek out young men of gifts in your Churches, and encourage them in the exercise of those gifts, and if found suitable for the ministry, assist them in getting an education, and labor to support those who are already engaged; endeavor, as far as possible, to release them from secular engagements, that they may give themselves wholly to the work, for it is the province of the Church to send out ministers; it is from them that they must derive their authority, and from no other earthly source. To neglect this, would be to neglect a vitally important duty assigned you in the great commission, "Preach the Gospel to every creature;" and the Apostle asks, "how can they preach unless they be sent?" Who are to send them? Manifestly the Church, after they are called of God. The Apostle said to a young preacher in his day, "study;" but how are they to study without time and opportunity? Give them this opportunity, and thus roll forward that little stone that Daniel saw, until it fills the whole earth. Thus you will fill your high destiny here; leaven the world with Christianity—establish the Kingdom of Messiah everywhere upon its own proper principles. In this we shall furnish the world with the spiritual Kingdom of Christ, built, carried out, and finished according to the pattern shewed us in the New Testament, and not according to the wisdom nor caprice of men. To do this, it is necessary that we have union—union of sentiment and of action. To have this, we must take Scripture for our guide. "Finally, brethren, be of one mind."

1858

STATISTICAL TABLE OF THE CHURCHES.

Churches.	Delegates.	Counties.	Postoffice.	Baptized	Received by Letter.	Excluded	Restored	Dead	Dismissed	Whites	Colored	Contributions	Sunday
N. Providence	Tilman Toler, Wm. Jenkins,	Amite,	Liberty,	...	...	...	5	12	6	41	105	..	40	4 50	4th
Ebenezer,	W. L. Johns, E. A. Haygood,	Amite,	Rose Hill,	24	4	...	1	6	98	54	152	..	75	10 00	3rd
East Fork,	L. Perkins, Z. Reeves,														
Zion Hill,	J. W. Felder,	Amite,	Liberty,	1	12	1	1	6	79	18	97	1	50	6 00	2nd
Shiloh,	Jas. A. Jenkins,	Amite,	Zion Hill,	3	3	2	3	2	59	12	71	..	45	4 00	3rd
Galilee,	Let. but no Del., B. Strawn,	Wilkinson,	Holly Retreat	...	...	...	...	2	5	50	55	..	12	1 50	...
Hopewell,	S. Jackson, D. D. Rollins,	Amite,	Centreville,	10	2	6	...	11	80	35	115	..	60	6 00	2nd
Marshill,	L. Wborton, Wm. Marselus,	Franklin,	Meadville,	2	..	...	...	1	14	7	21	..	20	5 00	2nd
Salem,	H. Gordon, J. W. Hornsby,	Amite,	Smithdale,	..	1	...	...	3	29	3	32	..	25	4 00	...
Friendship,	S. Blackwell, C. L. Oliver,	Pike,	Holmesville,	2	4	1	..	1	2	57	12	69	..	35	5 00	...
Ramah,	M. Smith. Wm. Young,	Franklin,	Friendship,	4	..	5	...	5	9	8	101	2	75	7 70	2nd
Jackson,	Wm. Pate, S. M. Brian,	Amite,	Smithdale,	..	...	...	...	4	16	1	17	..	20	2 50	....
Mt. Pleasant	C. C. Lea, Jas. Price,	E. Feliciana,	Jackson, La.,	3	2	6	1	2	..	20	120	146	..	30	5 00	2, 4,
Liberty,	R. Albriton, G. F. Webb,	Pike,	Holmesville,	13	...	...	...	1	..	37	8	45	..	40	6 00	4th
Mt. Zion,	E. Gardner, B. Bates,	Amite,	Liberty,	..	...	...	...	1	2	133	52	185	2	75	10 00	3rd
Friendship,	W. Cotton, Wilson Clark,	Franklin,	Meadville,	7	5	3	...	...	2	62	12	74	1	75	6 00	4th
Spring Hill,	S. W. Bullock, S. H. Whitehead,	Pike,	Holmesville,	22	7	..	1	1	..	....	..	44	1	50	9 00	3rd
Mt. Zion,	G. P. Claughton, W. J. Thompson,	Franklin,	Homochitto,	24	9	....	...	1	..	79	8	87	1	60	6	
Bogue Chitto	T. J. Hutson, J. Walker,	Copiah,	Colamer,	..	...	...	...	5	5	104	7	111	..	80	10	
Mt. Moriah,	J. B. Quinn, W. Guinn,	Pike,	Holmesville,	1	2	2	1	..	19	77	22	99	..	80	8 50	....
Larepta,	A. Scarborough, E. C. McCaa,	Lawrence,	Brookhaven,	5	1	1	..	...	2	37	3	40	1	35	6 00	4th
Macedonia,	W. Whitney, J. M. Smith,	Franklin,	Malcolm,	2	2	3	..	...	...	26	4	30	2	30	4 00	1,
Percy's Cr'k,	T. C. Smith, F. Clark,	Copiah,	Friendship,	1	4	..	1	...	...	40	1	41	..	30	4 00	
St. Helena,	S. E. McDonald, R. Fluker,	Wilkinson,	Percy's Cr'k,	23	4	6	1	4	5	55	47	102	1	60	8 00	
Bethel,	S. Davis, Not represented,		Darlington,	...	...	...	...	1	..	18	9	27	..	25	3 00	
Shady Grove	W. McCuller, E. Hodges,		Woodville,	...	...	...	...	...	...	....	..	....	..	40	.....	
Ft. Adams,	N. Boren,	Wilkinson,	Ft. Adams,	7	4	...	...	...	...	1	..	29	..	20	4 00	
				26	1	4	1	6	2	70	16	86	..	86	5 00	
				190	67	40	10	33	91	1653	550	1981	12	1273	150	95

OF THE

Fiftieth Anniversary

OF THE

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

HELD WITH THE

EAST FORK CHURCH, ATTITA CO. MISSISSIPPI.

October 4th, 5th, and 6th, 1856.

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE:
PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE "TENNESSEE BAPTIST,"
BY GRAVES, MARKS & RUTLAND.
1856.

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MINUTES.

East Fork Church, Amite Co, Miss., Oct. 4, 1856.

The Mississippi Baptist Association, pursuant to adjournment, met with the East Fork Church.

The Introductory Sermon was preached, according to appointment, by Elder M. S. Shirk, at 11 o'clock, A. M., from Philippians, 1st chapter, 9th verse.

Item 1. After a short recess, the delegates from the various Churches forming this Association were called to order by Elder Z. Reeves, and prayer offered by Elder Wm. B. Allen.

2. Appointed Elder M. S. Shirk and Brother J. B. Quin, reading clerks.

3. Called for and read letters from twenty-six Churches, enrolled the names of their delegates, and minuted their statistics. (See statistical table on 4th and 5th pages.)

4. The Association then organized by re-electing Elder Z. Reeves Moderator, and Brother L. Perkins Clerk; Brothers Wm. F. Cain and S. M. Brian acting as tellers.

5. Ministering brethren present of our faith and order were invited to seats, and to participate with us.

6. Appointed Brother G. P. Claughton assistant clerk.

7. The door was opened for the reception of Churches, and the Holmesville Baptist Church petitioned by letter and delegates for admittance into our union, and being found orthodox and orderly was received, and the hand of fellowship extended to her delegates by the Moderator.

8. Petitionary letters from Cold Spring and Pioneer Baptist Churches were received, but the delegates not being present, said letters were laid on the table.

9. The following committees were appointed by the Moderator, viz:

Committee on Preaching—Brothers Hampton Lea, Jas. A. Jenkins, and S. M. Brian.

Committee on Finance—Brothers Wm. F. Cain, Harris Turnipseed, and D. H. Quin.

Committee of Arrangements and Revision—Elders T. Kingsberry, H. McKnight, F. Clark, and W. Clark, with the Moderator and clerk.

Committee to prepare obituary notices of our much esteemed brothers, R. Thompson, Isaiah Cain, T. M. Bond, and T. R. Cheatham—viz: Elders M. S. Shirk, F. Clark, and H. McKnight.

10. The Committee on Preaching reported, that Elders F. Clark, M. S. Shirk, Calvin Magee, and T. Kingsberry preach on Lord's Day, in the order of their names.

11. Received correspondence from sister Associations as follows, viz:

From Pearl River—Elders Wm. Fortenberry and Calvin Magee, with a letter and minutes.

From Union—Brother J. H. Clark, messenger, with a letter and minutes.

From Eastern Louisiana—Elder Wm. B. Allen, messenger, with a letter.

From Ebenezer—Elder M. B. Robertson, messenger, with a letter; to all of whom the hand of fellowship was extended by the Moderator.

12. Appointed correspondence to sister Associations, as follows: viz:

To Mississippi River—Elders M. S. Shirk and H. McKnight messengers, and M. S. Shirk to write.

To Ebenezer—Elders W. Clark and J. A. Wroten messengers, and F. Clark to write.

To Eastern Louisiana—Elders W. Clark and E. Young messengers, and Brother W. F. Cain to write.

To Pearl River—Elders S. Coker, Z. Reeves, and T. Kingsberry messengers, and Brother D. H. Quin to write.

13. The stand having been filled since the introductory by Elders Fortenberry and Robertson, the Association adjourned to 9 o'clock Monday morning. Prayer by Elder F. Clark.

Sabbath.—At an early hour, Elder F. Clark in the stand, preached from Ephesians, 2d chapter and 20th verse, to a large and respectable audience, and was followed immediately by M. S. Shirk, from Isaiah 55th chapter, and 8th and 9th verses. After a short intermission, during which refreshments were had, the congregation was again seated, and Elder Calvin Magee being unwell, Elder John G. Taylor preached from St. John, 4th chapter and 42d verse, and was followed in conclusion by Elder T. Kingsberry, in a warm and feeling exhortation, when many went forward, desiring an interest in the prayers of God's people.

MONDAY MORNING, Oct. 6, 1856.

14. The Association met pursuant to adjournment. Prayer by the Moderator.

15. The Committee of Arrangements and Revision made the following report, which was received and adopted, viz:

1. Call the roll.
2. Read the rules of decorum.
3. Call for reports.
4. Call for circular letter.
5. Call for corresponding letters.
6. Call for queries.
7. Motions and resolutions.
8. Appointments.
9. Adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,

F. CLARK, Chairman.

16. The roll was called.

17. The rules of decorum and powers of the Asociation were read.

18. Reports called for, and Brother J. B. Quin presented his report as treasurer of the missionary fund, which was received and adopted. (See appendix A.)

19. The Financial Committee offered their reports, which were received and adopted. (See appendix B. and C.)

20. The Committee on Preaching reported that Elders Kingsberry, Mager, Robertson, and Bailey preach to-day in the order of their names.

21. Brothers Wm. F. Cain, W. Z. Lea, and C. J. Bates reported as follows on the Trust Fund:

BRETHREN—The undersigned, committee appointed at your last annual meeting to receive funds, purchase and sell Baptist denominational books, would respectfully report: That they have not received any funds from the Churches, but they have bought and sold, on their own account, $132 worth of books. We would earnestly recommend the Association to encourage in every possible way the distribution and reading of such books among the Churches, as many of them are valuable and of great aid in attaining a speedy and more correct understanding of the Bible.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

WM. F. CAIN,
W. Z. LEA,
C. J. BATES,
} Committee.

STATISTICAL TABLE OF THE CHURCHES.

CHURCHES.	DELEGATES.	COUNTIES.	POST OFFICE.	Baptized.....	Received by letter	Excluded	Restored.....	Dead	Dismissed ..	Whites	Colored	Total in Fellowship ..	Ministers	Copies of minutes	Contribution	Sunday meetings.....
New Providence, ...	Silas Thompson, ... Allen Jenkins.	Amite, ...	Liberty, ...	1	1	0	0	1	2	61	41	102	0	50	$ 6 00	4
Ebenezer, ...	D Perkins, L. G Brown, ... W. H. Gunby.	Amite,.....	Rose Hill,.....	9	3	4	0	0	7	99	53	152	0	75	10 00	3
East Fork, ...	Z Reeves, ... H. M. Lea.	Amite, ...	Liberty, ...	1	2	2	0	0	4	72	23	95	1	70	6 00	2
Zion Hill, ...	Saml O'Neal, ... I. A. Jenkins.	Amite,.....	Zion Hill,.....	0	2	6	0	0	4	52	12	64	0	35	3 00	3
Shiloh, ...	Not represented.															
Galilee,.....	S. Jackson,..... G B. McClain.	Amite,.....	Centreville, ...	0	1	3	0	0	5	75	33	108	0	60	5 00	2
Hopewell, ...	Wm P Dodds, James Lea.....	Franklin,.....	Meadville, ...	3	0	0	0	1	0	15	8	23	0	20	5 00	3
Marshill, ...	Wm. F. Cain, ... Wm. Marselas.	Amite,.....	Smithdale,.....	10	3	0	1	0	1	42	3	45	0	35	5 00	3
Salem,.....	I. J Carter..... J. N. Bankston.	Pike, ...	Holmesville, ...	3	0	0	0	4	2	53	13	66	0	35	5 00	3
Friendship, ...	W. H Bailey..... James E. Byrd.	Franklin,.....	Friendship, ...	6	0	7	1	1	3	89	9	98	2	50	5 00	2
Ramah,.....	I. A. Wroten..... Elijah Young.	Amite,.....	Smithdale,.....	3	1	2	0	1	1	16	1	17	0	15	2 00	3
Jackson,.....	G. W. Catlette, J. C. Lea.	E. Feliciana, ...	Jackson, La.,	21	5	0	0	2	2	40	128	168	0	40	5 00	2&4
Mt. Pleasant,.....	S. M Brian. I. T. Reeves, ... R. Allbriton.	Pike,.....	Summit,.....	17	4	0	2	0	0	59	9	68	0	50	6 00	1
Liberty, ...	H. McKnight, M. S. Shirk, ... W. Z. Lea.	Amite,.....	Liberty, ...	21	4	3	0	1	3	145	58	203	2	70	10 00	1&3

CHURCHS.	DELEGATES.	COUNTIES.	POST OFFICE.	Baptized	Re by letter	Excluded	Restored	Dead	Dismissed	Whites	Colored	Total in Fellowship	Ministers	Copies of minutes	Contribution	Sunday meetings
Mt. Zion,	H. S. Anderson, J. R. Cotton.	Franklin,	Meadville,	9	2	5	1	2	6	61	13	74	0	60	7 00	4
Friendship,	Wilson Clark, S. Bullock.	Pike,	Holmesville,	15	0	0	0	0	6	50	2	52	1	40	7 50	3
Spring Hill,	M. Neal.	Franklin,	Holmesville,	7	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	72	0	60	4 00	1&3
Mt. Zion,	G. P. Claughton.	Copiah,	Colamer,	5	5	2	0	0	12	100	7	107	0	70	10 00	4
Bogue Chitto,	Jesse Minton, H. A Sessions.	Pike,	Holmesville,	33	0	2	0	0	13	92	25	117	0	75	8 00	1
Mt. Moriah,	H. Turnipseed, J. B. Quin.	Lawrence,	Brookhaven,	2	1	0	0	0	4	39	3	42	0	30	6 00	3
Sarepta,	Uriah Gill, A. Scarborough.	Franklin,	Meadville,	24	2	1	1	0	7	45	6	51	2	40	6 00	1&3
Macedonia,	Elihu McCaa, Thomas Harris.	Copiah,	Friendship,	4	1	0	0	0	0	40	4	44	2	40	4 00	1
Percy's Creek,	David Day, E. P. Bailey.	Wilkinson,	Percy's Creek,	0	0	2	0	1	6	45	42	87	1	40	5 00	2&4
St. Helena,	F. Clark, J. S. Smith.	St. Helena,	Darlington, La.,	3	3	0	0	0	0	21	11	32	1	25	3 00	1
Bethel,	J. G. Taylor, L. L. Lea.	Wilkinson,	Woodville,	16	7	1	0	3	5	21	26	47	1	40	5 00	2
Shady Grove,	T Kingsberry, S. D. Platner.	Pike,	Holmesville,	6	1	2	0	0	0	21	26	34	0	25	5 00	2
Ft. Adams,	S. Coker, Edmund Hodges.	Wilkinson	Ft. Adams,	3	0	2	0	3	3	55	22	77	0	60	5 00	1&3
Holmesville,	L. L. Babers,	Pike,	Holmesville,	3	1	0	0	0	0	9	4	13	0	20	2 00	
	D. H. Quin, P. B. Williams.			227	49	48	6	15	93	1406	556	2058	13	1213	150 50	

22. The committee appointed at the last meeting of this body to visit the school of Elder M. S. Shirk, reported as follows:

BRETHREN—At your last annual meeting, the undersigned, together with others, were appointed a visiting committee to attend the examination of the Female Seminary, taught by Brother M. S. Shirk, in the town of Liberty. In compliance with the duties thus imposed, and in consideration of the interest which we individually felt in the success of said school, we beg leave to report that we were present during the three days of the examination, July 15th, 16th, and 17th, and will say, that while from our knowledge of Bro. Shirk and his teachers, we anticipated an interesting examination of his school; yet we found them proficient in all the varied departments so far beyond that expectation, that we cannot in justice withhold our admiration and praise. According to the judgment of that portion of your committee present, it was by far the most thorough and perfect examination that we have ever witnessed in all the varied branches and studies of the school; and in the judgment of your committee, too high commendation cannot be awarded to Bro. Shirk, the corps of teachers connected with him, and the young ladies of his Institution, for the faithful manner in which they have severally discharged their duties. And your committee would respectfully suggest, that in their judgment the Association cannot better subserve the cause of female education in our midst, than by continuing the encouragement to this school, and by recommending it to the public patronage, since there can be none found where a more thorough education is imparted. By a *thorough education*, we mean that education which makes the exact and practical scholar, and the refined and cultivated lady; which looks to the heart as well as the mind; while it expands the intellect, corrects also and disciplines the social and moral affections. These being attained in a high degree with Brother Shirk, your committee deem this school one which should engage the best wishes and efforts of all those who are seeking an Institution in which to thoroughly educate and instruct, and morally train and cultivate their daughters. When to this we add the consideration of locality, its healthiness, its peculiar religious advantages, and the high moral sentiment of the community, it is rendered in our judgment an Institution meriting in all respects, and in a peculiar degree, the fostering care of our Association, and the influence and support of an enlightened public generally.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

WM. F. CAIN,
F. CLARK,
J. W. FELDER,
L. PERKINS,
} Committee.

23. The committee on obituaries reported as follows:

REPORT ON OBITUARY NOTICES.

BRETHREN—Your committee appointed to prepare obituary notices beg leave to report: That it is their painful duty to record the death of three valued and devoted brethren—deacons in our denomination.

Brother Isaiah Cain, deacon of Zion Hill Church, departed this life January 3, 1855, in the 60th year of his age. As a citizen, as a soldier in the American army, and as a civil officer, he was without reproach. As a Christian and an officer in the Church, he was consecrated to the glory af God, the welfare of Zion, and the good of his fellow creatures. Though resting from his labors and gone to his reward, his memory is embalmed in our hearts.

Brother Rowlin Thompson, a deacon of New Providence Church, went to his final rest on Sabbath evening, June 17th, 1855, aged 64 years. "In a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season." In the avocations and pursuits of business life, and in all his relations with men, he was in the strictest sense—the highest and best sense—an upright citizen and an honest man. As a Christian, he loved the cause of his Redeemer, and as a deacon of the Church he sought to know and to discharge the duties of his office with fidelity. The closing scenes of Brother Thompson were such as his life would naturally pre-suppose. He saw the messenger from afar and set his house in order. On his arrival he calmly listened to the summons, bowed his head and is gone up to glory.

Brother Thomas R. Cheatham, a deacon of New Providence Church, died July 7, 1856, aged 69 years. For many years, successively, he was a delegate to this body, and always took a deep interest, as he bore an active part in its proceedings. To admit that he had faults, is but to acknowledge he was human. But if he thus had what all others have, it may also be said, that he had what all others have not, virtue enough to overbalance them. Ever a stern advocate for the truth, he could not compromise with error in any form. Yet he had a heart of tenderness and friendship for all who merited and sought it, and his benevolence was unlimited by the boundaries of sect. He loved the cause of Christ, and was ever ready to labor for the advancement of Evangelical Christianity. But for his own Church he felt a special and deep solicitude. This occupied his thoughts in his last hours. Death was not to him unexpected nor unwelcome, but the spirit struggled hard ere it could be released from earth to mount the upper skies. Who shall fill his place?

Brethren, they are gone, and deeply do we deplore their loss. But the loss is ours ; theirs is gain.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

M. S. SHIRK, Chairman.

Rev. Thomas M. Bond departed this life October 7, 1855. In the decease of this able, devoted, laborious and talented minister of the gospel, our Churches have sustained no ordinary loss. For years we have been accustomed to look to him as one of the pillars of Baptist principles in our extended regions, and we deeply lament his loss; yet not without the consoling reflection that though lost to the Church on earth, he lives, a spirit, in glory.

Brother Bond was born in the State of Georgia, March 25, 1810. When quite a child his father, Henry Bond, emigrated to the State of Mississippi, Pike county. He professed religion at the age of 17 years, and was baptized into the fellowship of Salem Baptist Church. In his 18th year he was united in marriage with Rebecca Felder, a daughter of Rev. Chas. Felder. At the age of 20 he was licensed to preach the gospel, and ordained to full work of the ministry in 1836. From that period to the close of life he was identified with all the interests of his denomination in this portion of our country.

During the twenty years of his ministry, though often in feeble health, he labored most efficiently for God, and heaven sealed with approbation the word spoken, to the conversion of more than two thousand souls, whom he was permitted to bury with his Lord in baptism. The character of his mind was acute, investigating and discriminative, to an extraordinary degree, for one of his scholastic discipline. Rarely did he close a sermon without exhibiting, by the fervor of his manner, and the tone of his voice, that his soul was interested for the salvation of sinners His heart was with his brethren in every good word and work. But he is gone to the grave. He leaves behind a widow and three children to mourn his loss, and whom we commend to your sympathies and prayers. We mourn his loss with heart-felt sorrow, and tender to his bereaved family our sincere condolence.

Respectfully submitted,

M. S. SHIRK, Chairman.

All of which reports were received and the committees discharged.

24. Circular letter called for, read, and adopted. (See circular.)

25. Corresponding letters called for, read, and approved.

26. Queries called for.

27. Motions and resolutions.

28. *Resolved*, That the funds sent up by the Cold Spring and Pioneer Baptist Churches, to defray Associational expenses, be placed in the hands of the Treasurer, subject to the order of said Churches, and that minutes of this meeting be sent to them.

29. *Resolved*, That Brothers S. M. Brian, J. B. Quin, and L. L. Lea be appointed to nominate a committee of twenty-five to visit the Amite Female Seminary, taught by Elder M. S. Shirk, in Liberty, Amite co., Miss., during the examination thereof in July next, to report to the next meeting of this body, who made the following nominations, viz: Elders Z. Reeves, T. Kingsberry, F. Clark, J. F. Thompson, and Brothers G. P. Claughton, L. Perkins, Wm. L. Johns, W. P. Dodds, H. Turnipseed, J. B. Quin, S. W. Bullock, J. W. Felder, W. F. Cain, J. L. Downs, Moses Jackson, Robt. Tickell, S. D. Platner, J. R. Cotton, G. F. Webb, R. R. Beckdell, Charles Stewart, E. L. Bramlet, D. H. Quin, S. M. Brian, S. Davis, and J. R. Jackson.

30. *Resolved*, That the Churches composing this Association, be requested to state in their letters, in future, addressed to our annual meetings, the amount contributed to the various benevolent objects during the Associational year.

31. *Resolved*, That we adopt, in the place of a circular letter, in our next minutes, an abstract of the letters from the Churches in correspondence with this body.

32. *Resolved*, That Brothers W. F. Cain, W. Z. Lea, and C. J. Bates be appointed a trust committee, to receive contributions from the Churches for the purchasing of books pertaining to our denomination, to be kept in deposit and for sale at such place or places as they may deem expedient, and report to the next meeting of this body.

33. *Resolved*, That Brothers J. B. Quin, Wm. P. Dodds, S. M. Brian, H. McKnight, and G. P. Claughton be appointed a committee to designate such books or publications to be purchased by the trust committee, as are best adapted to the wants of the Churches.

34. *Resolved*, That Elders Z. Reeves, H. McKnight, W. Clark, T. Kingsberry, M. S. Shirk, and Brothers Wm. P. Dodds, J. B. Quin, S. M. Brian, H. S. Anderson, G. F. Webb, and L. Perkins, be appointed a committee to revise (for publication in these Minutes) a sermon in defence of the government and principles of the Baptist Church, delivered by Elder M. S. Shirk at Ebenezer, Amite county, Miss, on the 16th day of December, 1855.

35. *Resolved*, That this Association tender to the brethren, sisters and friends of this vicinity their thanks for the hospitable manner in

which they have entertained us during our stay among them.

36. Appointed Elder Wilson Clark to preach the next Introductory Sermon at 10 o'clock, A. M., and Elder Z. Reeves his alternate.

37. Appointed the Clerk to superintend the printing and distribution of thirteen hundred copies of these Minutes, with the sermon above alluded to annexed, and that he be allowed the usual compensation, and directed to call on the Treasurer for funds to defray the expenses of the same.

38. Appointed the Treasurer to take charge of the funds contributed at this meeting, to pay for printing of sermon.

39. Appointed the next meeting of this body with the Liberty Church, Amite county, Miss., on Saturday before the first Lord's Day in October, A. D. 1857.

40. The Minutes read for correction; after which we joined in singing a hymn of praise, and gave each other the parting hand; then united in prayer and were dismissed.

ZACHARIAH REEVES, Moderator.

L. PERKINS, Clerk.

MINISTERS OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

Zachariah Reeves,
Hamilton McKnight,
Wilson Clark,
Wm. Thompson,
Elihu McCaa,
Wm. Whitney,
F. Clark,
Milton S. Shirk,
T Kingsberry,
John G. Taylor,
Wm. H. Bailey,
Wm. East.

LICENTIATES.

Carroll Clark,
T. J. Hudson,
C. L. Oliver.
E. M. Taybour,
Elbert Rush,
J. A. Wroten,
Elijah Young.

The committee appointed by the Association to revise the sermon of Elder M. S. Shirk, appointed to meet in Liberty, Amite co., Miss., on the 27th of November, 1856, but owing to the inclemency of the weather, only four met, viz: Elder Z. Reeves, and Brothers J. B. Quin, G. F. Webb, and L. Perkins, who made no appointment for a subsequent meeting. I did not therefore deem it advisable longer to delay the printing of the Minutes.

November 27, 1856.

L. PERKINS, Clerk.

APPENDIX.

[A.]

Jas. B. Quin, Treasurer of Missionary and Benevolent Fund,
In account with Mississippi Baptist Association.

Your Treasurer charges himself with the following sums, received on account of said fund, to wit:

To this amount received for	Foreign Missions,	$28	50
" "	Indian and Domestic Missions,	31	10
" "	Bible Society, S. B. Convention,	17	50
" "	Education of Brother E. Rush,	165	80
" "	Education Society,	6	25
" In your Treasurer's hands as per last report,		20	65
		269	80

Your Treasurer prays allowance for the following disbursements on account of said Missionary fund, to wit:

For this amount paid Archibald Thomas on account Foreign Missions, voucher No. 1,	28	50
For this amount paid W. Hornbuckle on account Indian and Domestic Missions, voucher No. 2,	31	10
For this amount paid Charles A. Fuller, Treasurer, on account of Bible Board, S. B. Convention, voucher No. 3,	17	50
For this amount paid Brother Elbert Rush, voucher No. 4,	53	80
" " " " No. 5,	109	20
" " " Thomas Bond, " No. 6,	21	00
" " " Saml. Thigpen, Treasurer Educational Society, voucher No. 7,	6	25
	267	55
Balance in hands of Treasurer,	2	25

Your Treasurer of Missionary and Benevolent Funds begs leave to submit the foregoing as his report to your body.

October 4, 1856. JAS. B. QUIN, Treas. Mis. Funds.

[*B.*]

Your Financial Committee would report the following amounts received at this meeting for missionary and benevolent purposes:

From Marshill Church, for Foreign Mission $5, Domestic Missions $5, Bible cause,		$15 00
From Jackson Church, African Mission,		12 15
" S. W. Bullock for African Mission,		5 00
" Mt. Zion Copiah for Bible Society,		1 00
" Bogue Chitto for Foreign Missions,		17 00
" " " for Bible Board, S. B. C.,		8 50
" Percy's Creek Church for Home Missions,		11 00
" " " for Foreign "		4 00
" Holmesville Church, " Domestic "		5 00
" J. A. Jenkins, " Foreign "		2 50
" Liberty Church, " Edueation of Bro. E. Rush,		10 00
		91 15

RECAPITULATION.

For Foreign Missioas,	28 50
" Domestic Missions,	21 00
" Bible Board, S. B. C.,	14 50
" African Missions,	17 15
" Education of E. Rush,	10 00
	91 15

Respectfully submitted.

W. F. CAIN,
D. H. QUIN,
H. TURNIPSEED, } Committee.

[*C.*]

The Financial Committee report as follows on the funds sent up to defray Associational expenses:

To this amount in the hands of the Treasurer,		$118 78
" Contributions from the Churches,		156 00
" Contributed by the delegates to pay for printing sermons with minutes,		35 50
" Cold Spring Church $2,50, Pioneer Ch. $3,00,		5 50
		315 78
To this amount paid out.		
Paid Z. Reeves,	$32 00	
" W. Clark,	24 00	
" S. Coker,	9 00	
" For printing these Minutes,	42 00	
" " postage on "	13 00	
" " superintending the same,	15 00	
Balance in hands of Treasurer,		180 78

Respectfully submitted,

W. F. CAIN,
D. H. QUIN,
H. TURNIPSEED, } Committee.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."—Daniel xii. 2.

The doctrine of the resurrection is perhaps second in importance to no doctrine taught in the Scriptures of divine truth; it is entitled to and deserves our highest regard, because it is the grand hinge on which Christianity turns. This doctrine was held to, and to some extent believed and taught, long ages before it was proven occularly in the resurrection of our blessed Redeemer, after his crucifixion. It is, however, contended by some who profess to di-believe this teaching of the Scriptures, that the doctrine is not true from the fact that the passage above selected does not clearly imply a general resurrection of the dead, but only holds to the idea that many and not all that are sleeping in the dust of the earth shall awake. If this question had not been fully, and to our mind most satisfactorily settled by the New Testament writers, it would perhaps be necessary to say something here in proof of its general character; but while the New Testament continues to be regarded as God's word, we can with all safety and confidence rest that point upon the proof contained in that holy volume, and hence need not argue a demonstrated proposition.

We shall now endeavor to consider the proof at our command of the doctrine of the resurrection, as its importance requires irrefragible proof for the reason above given, that Christianity itself hinges on this doctrine; for do away with it, and you at once sweep away the idea of a general judgment, as we understand the Sriptures to teach, a doctrine at once not only consistent with divine justice, but absolutely necessary in order that the fundamental principles of our holy religion can be be made to appear consistent, harmonious, and just.*

The contemplation of this subject must ever be a matter of deepest solicitude by the two great classes into which Adam's posterity must at last be divided. According as it is viewed by hope or fear, it will ever produce the most transporting joy, or deepest grief. The righteous rejoice in the pleasing reflection that a day is coming when all their actions and thoughts will be subjected to the scrutiny of Him who can discern the motives that prompted them to do whatever they may have done in life, which they hope to hear classed with the acts of those whom the Great Judge will pronounce the ransomed of the Lord. They anxiously await the coming of the Lord; they dread not his approach; they fear not his presence; to them he is all and in all, transcendently bright, glorious, and powerful, whose approving smile will waft them away to their eternal rest, their home in heaven, their bright and last abode around the throne; yea, welcome them to a seat among the perfected just who join in the song of Moses and the Lamb. Happy thought! worthy the toils, the troubles, and the trials of all our lives, our energies, and faculties, however long, energetic and great they may be.

But how different, how widely different is the resurrection viewed by those who are conscious of having lived in habitual violation of those laws and teachings found on record in that book out of which they must at last be judged. They know that in life they have been evil doers; sin in every shape has been indulged in by them; they have blasphemed God's holy name; they have long ridiculed his ordinances, and set at naught his precepts; they have lived riotously, they have been lascivious, and truth they have not loved; wickedness in high places of every name and kind they have constantly indulged in, and in low places they have not abstained from it; they have been drunk with the blood of saints, and wagged their hands at the dying Lord, and they have crucified anew the adorable Redeemer. Well may they tremble at his approach; well may they call upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon them and hide

*1 Cor. xv. Rev. xx. 13.

them from his presence; well may they fear his coming, his threatenings, and his judgments; well may they try to disbelieve the doctrine of the resurrection and day of accounts, but "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation"—John v. 28, 29.

That we must all ere long die, and take our place with those who have done good, or with those who have done evil, and so be judged, is simply to give utterance to a truism. We have a brief day in which we act our part in life, and then go away. After the turmoils of life a long sleep awaits our bodies; the silence of the grave no earthly commotion can ever disturb; one long unbroken repose is what awaits us after death has performed his office; with decay and worms what of us remains earthy we will have to contend, and to common appearance the work of annihilation will go on as time wastes away, until its end is fully accomplished—what of man is mortal perishes, "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return,"—but over the grave there is a victory, and death loses its sting; this is not our continued abiding place; our stay will be short though we reach our four score years; here we measure time, compare timely things with her cycles, but this is only a preparatory state of existence in which we "fit ourselves as living stones for that spiritual building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," or for an abode with those who are destined finally to be lost.

Our idea of the resurrection is derived entirely from revelation. Aside from that source of information, we and the world at large would have remained in the most profound ignorance to the present day, and consequently in unbelief upon this subject, for by human reason the idea of the dead being raised could not possibly ever have been conceived of. We see one of our fellow beings die like the beast of the field, and by the process of putrifaction as before remarked, decay is brought about, and in a short time the body we once knew and saw die, mingles with the common dust, and is no longer distinguishable, or capable of identity. Seeing this, how natural to suppose its existence here finally terminates. This was the view taken by minucious Felix, who reproached the early Christians who believed in the doctrine of the resurrection, with the promulgation of foolish fables, and characterized and ridiculed their teaching as a two-fold madness, saying contemptuously, you predict the destruction of the sun, moon, and stars, but claim for yourselves an eternal existence. The Athenian philosophers, in their wisdom, also mocked when they heard Paul preaching this doctrine, and said tauntingly, "we will hear you again on this subject, or of this matter." The Church at Corinth was not without disbelievers in this doctrine. Others knowing that the doctrine was clearly taught in the Scriptures, contended that the resurrection was already passed that it was only expressive of a resurrection from a state of sin and ignorance, and not from the dead.

In reply to all this we have only to say, that however mysterious the doctrine may have appeared to them in their day, the Scriptures are replete with passages teaching it with a clearness that the fool may understand. We might cite many portions of God's word pointing directly to this subject; we shall, however, quote a few texts which will be found touching this matter. "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead; but if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ, when he raised not up, if so be, that the dead rise not"

Were we to disbelieve all the teachings of the Holy Scriptures which are beyond our comprehension and reason, we would indeed disbelieve much. We are simple finite beings, created for the purpose of obeying God's laws, living in accordance with his commandments, and it is enough for us to know that God has said, and our duty is to obey with alacrity, asking no questions as to his reasons for saying a thing is so, or asking for proof of the sacred word which he has graciously given as a guide for our faith and practice, and which upon all essential points are sufficiently plain, even to the weakest intellect, for the purposes of salvation. Let us think for a moment how transcendently ridiculous must that poor mortal, that mere insect appear, who in his folly

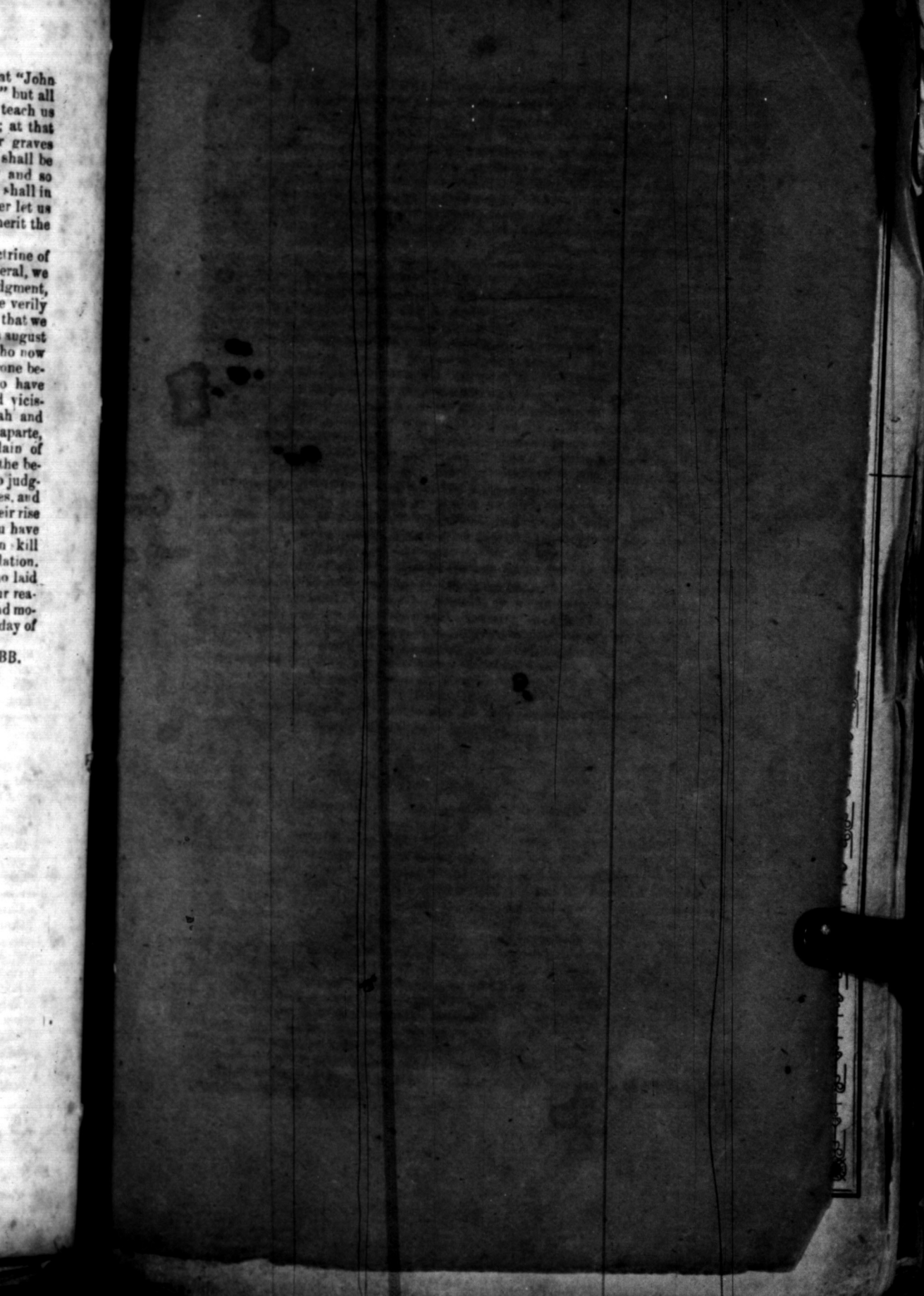
dare stand up and ridicule any doctrine taught in God's word. May not the ridicule of earth's intelligence be turned against all such sceptics with much force, though they be found in the illustrious persons of Hume and Bolingbroke, of Payne and Voltaire? Renowned sages and patriots, a halo of glory has long been around your heads and o'er your tombs, but the day is coming when you must all appear before Him who is to be your Judge, and in whose presence your faces will turn pale, and you stand mute and abashed. On earth you were among the great; from your elevation you could look around on those below you, but this will not be the case in eternity. The wise and the foolish, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, will stand alike upon the platform of equality, and God Almighty will be their Judge. Oh! that sinners everywhere over earth's broad surface would believe this all important truth, and turn away from their sins ere it is eternally too late; take God's word as they find it, believe all his teachings and become wise unto salvation.

Of the appearance of the glorified body, we have only to conjecture. That it will appear in an improved state, none doubt. Paul in his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians informs us that "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." This language may be considered to some extent uncertain and indistinct, but from all the information we can derive from the Holy Scriptures it will be incorruptible and immortal, neither subject to dissolution nor decay. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, nor any more pain." The soul and body again unite, and with their union become immortal. What will be the appearance of the resurrected body we cannot tell, but we are told that the bodies of the saints will be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ. No doubt it will be fashioned after the highest pattern in the universe; that in symmetry, beauty, and lofty dignity, it will be perfect, but the improved appearance of the body is we imagine, among the least of the improvements that will be manifested in our change. The mind is to strengthen, refine, and expand, until it is capable of comprehending angelic mysteries, heavenly beauties, and the great system that brings together those whose "robes are made white in the blood of the Lamb;" capable of enjoying the presence of Him, the brightness of whose face we could not here look upon and live. We shall there recognize those of our friends and acquaintances whom we knew in life; we can again meet in sweet converse those we loved here. We shall see the apostles face to face; the prophets will be our associates; the good men of old will be there, and we shall know them; and our dear departed parents, our children, and relatives, will sit down in glory with us, to join in the rapturous hymns of salvation, and with us raise a loud acclaim to Jehovah's praise.

"The fount of life will then be quaft,
In peace by all who come,
And every wind that blows shall waft
Some long lost exile home."

An idea has been entertained by some that the resurrection of the saints will be first, and before the general resurrection, and this idea is most probably founded on the following Scripture: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." This passage seems to teach the doctrine, not only of the resurrection of the saints first, but also of the personal reign of Christ upon earth, and makes the millennial period; but the language and the circumstances are too uncertain and obscure to justify the forming of any positive opinion. This subject has been fully and ably treated by Rev. John Dick. He says: "It probably refers to a spiritual resurrection; a resurrection of the cause for which the martyrs suffered, which will then be triumphant; and while their names will be held in honor, persons of the same spirit will arise and reign with Christ, in the uninterrupted enjoyment of religion and its privileges, Satan being bound, and his agents reduced to inactivity and silence."

Some such construction is founded also by this circumstance, that "John spake not of the bodies, but of the souls of those who had been slain," but all this is man's speculation, and should be so regarded. The Scriptures teach us that the resurrection will take place at the second coming of Christ; at that time Paul informs us that there will be two classes, the dead in their graves and those that will be alive: "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord." God Almighty forbid that any of us shall in that day have to 'come forth to the resurrection of damnation" Rather let us all hear the welcome benediction, "Come in ye blessed of the Lord, inherit the kingdom prepared for you"

In conclusion of this letter, we would say, that to our mind the doctrine of the resurrection is clearly taught. That the resurrection will be general, we think is also undeniable; that it is necessary in order to a general judgment, and that the resurrection of the two classes will be at the same time, we verily believe, and believing all these propositions, how important for us it is that we make our calling and election sure. We need not attempt to avoid this august scene. We will have to be there for heaven or hell, and not only those who now have a place on the earth, but all who are to come after us, and have gone before us through the long line that runs back to Adam; yes, you who have marked the progress of mankind through all the epochs of history, and vicissitudes of time; ye inhabitants of Babylon and Damascus, of Ninevah and Memphis, and you renowned heroes, Alexander the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte, and boasting Xerxes, with all your mighty armies of the dead, ye slain of Platea, of Marathon, and Waterloo; in short, you who have died from the beginning, under whatever circumstances, or in whatever clime, awake to judgment. You have built in deserts and arid wastes, great cities, empires, and kingdoms, and you have desolated them again. You have rejoiced in their rise and progress, and you have mourned with their expiring glory. You have witnessed all these grand changes which show the great works of human skill in their erection, and the effects of the mutations of time in their desolation. You have left behind you many stones that tell the sad story of those who laid them Come now and give an account, each of you for yourselves—your reasons for bloodshed and cause of quarrel—your excuses for wickedness and motives that prompted you—speak now in your own behalf, "For the great day of his wrath is come, and who will be able to stand."

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